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Summary record of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 22 March 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 108: Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*) (A/59/534/Add.3 and Corr.1 and A/59/569/Add.3)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/59/534/Add.3 and Corr.1), said that the report's purpose was to seek additional funding for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB), since the resource requirements in the Secretary-General's previous report (A/59/534/Add.1) were limited to the first four months of 2005.

2. The report included the requirements for UNAMI for the remaining eight months of 2005, on the assumption that the Security Council would extend its mandate beyond 11 August 2005. The requested amount of $87,793,500 net would cover, inter alia, the cost of 198 additional staff in Basra, Erbil and Baghdad and the deployment of three guard units comprising 334 personnel, including logistics/life support.

3. Since the mandate of UNOMB had not been expected to extend beyond 31 December 2004, the resources requested in the previous report had related only to liquidation activities. However, the Mission's mandate had subsequently been extended for a further six months, to 30 June 2005 and the report currently before the Committee therefore included additional proposed requirements amounting to $701,800 net.

4. The total additional requirements for the activities of both UNAMI and UNOMB were estimated at $88,441,900 net. Of that amount, $5,320,900 would be met from the unencumbered balance of the existing appropriation. Tables 1 and 2 contained detailed estimates broken down by Mission and major component, respectively. The resource requirements requested in the current report were in addition to the $349,053,300 already allocated to special political missions by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

5. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/569/Add.3), said that the Advisory Committee was not recommending any reduction in the estimates requested by the Secretary-General. However, it had noted a number of shortcomings in the budget presentation for UNAMI and, while acknowledging the difficulties faced by the Secretariat, trusted that a fuller presentation would be possible, in the light of unfolding events and experience, in the next budget submission. The Advisory Committee had also reiterated its request that the Secretary-General should consider ways and means to present the budgets of large missions in a manner that would be more suitable for their size and complexity in order to allow for more detailed consideration of estimates for such missions and afford an opportunity to monitor their budgetary performance.

6. Requirements for logistics/life support services accounted for a significant portion of the estimates. As the situation in Iraq improved, UNAMI would begin to build its own capacities in that area, which should result in savings. However, wherever possible, the Mission should also hire national staff to carry out necessary functions. With regard to the proposed hiring of consultants to provide security awareness induction training for new staff, the Advisory Committee had recommended that, to the extent possible, internal capacities, such as the Department of Security and Safety, should be used to provide such training.

7. In conclusion, the Advisory Committee had emphasized that, depending on events beyond the control of the Mission, there might be significant savings, or even the need for additional resources. Should the situation stabilize, the Committee would expect the next budget estimates to be subject to the usual discipline.

8. **Mr. van den Bossche** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union and referring to the estimated resource requirements for UNOMB, said that, in view of the extension of the mandate of UNOMB for a further six months, the European Union had taken note of the need for additional resources to ensure the continued functioning of the Mission.

9. As far as UNAMI was concerned, while the European Union agreed with the Advisory Committee that the volatility of the situation in Iraq made precise determinations concerning resource and personnel requirements difficult, it also shared the Advisory Committee's expectation that the Secretariat would make a fuller presentation in the next budget submission. The recent growth in resource requirements for special political missions and the possibility of continued growth in the future meant that every effort must be made to use resources efficiently and, to that end, early and more transparent budget information was required. In that connection, the European Union was in favour of improving the presentation and transparency of budgetary information in order to facilitate the consideration of such information but emphasized its attachment to the continuation of consolidated reporting on special political missions. The further consideration of that issue during informal consultations would have no implications for the mode of funding for any mission.

10. **Ms. Wang** Xinxia (China) expressed her delegation's support for the work of UNAMI which, for over a year and in exceptional circumstances, had been assisting Iraq with its economic reconstruction and political transition. The Secretary-General's report had been submitted on the assumption that the mandate of UNAMI would be extended beyond 11 August 2005. However, it was her understanding that events beyond that date would depend entirely on whether or not the Security Council decided to extend the Mission's mandate. In that connection, she endorsed the comments contained in paragraph 7 of the Advisory Committee's report and expected that, once the situation in Iraq had stabilized, the Secretariat would submit a more detailed report that would be subject to the usual budgetary discipline.

11. **Mr. Yoo** Dae-jong (Republic of Korea) said that both UNAMI and UNOMB demonstrated that special political missions could make substantial contributions to the resolution of difficult and challenging problems and conflicts. However, while the assistance provided by UNAMI had been invaluable to the progress made in Iraq in recent months, the security situation in that country remained fragile. It would therefore be wise to prepare for the possible extension of the Mission's mandate by, inter alia, channelling additional resources towards the establishment of an integrated security and safety structure for UNAMI.

12. With regard to operational costs, the Advisory Committee had recommended that the Mission should use internal capacities, such as the Department of Security and Safety, to provide security awareness induction training for new staff. The Secretariat should explore ways of taking advantage of the capacities of that Department and report its findings to the Committee.

13. Lastly, while acknowledging the Secretariat's efforts to establish an objective-oriented budget and recognizing that the current situation in Iraq made it difficult to determine resource and personnel requirements, he agreed with the Advisory Committee that substantial refinement was needed and would welcome more detailed information, including quantifiable indicators of achievement and outputs, during the informal consultations.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.